

Introduction

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The past 125 years have seen the Amsterdam/Churchill community grow into a tight-knit community, based on farming, which serves as a quiet reminder of rural Montana in an area seeing tremendous growth and change. The Settlement was formed in the latter part of the 19th century, as the newly-formed Manhattan Malting Company turned to Europe, and specifically the Netherlands, for farming families to supply the barley and operate the irrigation canals. As more Dutch families resettled to the community, the Dutch Reformed Church took on a central role in organizing community life that has continued to this day.

Many of the same families who originally formed the settlements of Amsterdam and Churchill remain in the community today. As Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley continue their own transformation from agricultural valley to internationally-connected small city, Amsterdam/Churchill has begun to see an increase in growth as well. In order to address the impacts that inevitably accompany change, the Amsterdam/Churchill community has chosen to come together to draft the following community plan.

1.1 Planning Process

The planning process resulting in adoption of this community plan has been ongoing since November 2007 and has had the input of many individuals. Specifically, the following steps were taken:

Educational Meetings. Four educational meetings were held over the course of four months the summer of 2007. The following topics were discussed:

- Road and Transportation Issues
- Education
- Community Sewer and Water Issues
- Fire Department and Emergency Services

Kickoff Meeting, November 15, 2007. Over 80 community members attended the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Kickoff Event. Participants were asked to respond to four questions. Responses to those questions have formed the foundation on which all goals and policies have been based:

- What makes Amsterdam/Churchill a great place to live?
- What concerns do you have for the future?
- What should change in the future in this community?
- What should stay the same?

From Dialogue to Action, January 22, 2008. Over 80 participants attended the second community planning event, called “From Dialogue to Action”, on January 22nd. Participants were asked to evaluate the guiding principles developed at the kickoff and list what actions and tools should be taken and used to implement those principles.

Initial Recommendations, March 22nd, 2008. The third community event was a presentation and discussion of the initial recommendations from the steering committee. Those initial recommendations have been included throughout the plan.

Steering Committee Meetings. A steering committee of approximately 12 community members was formed after the Kickoff Event to guide the planning process. The steering committee has met twice a month with staff from the Gallatin County Planning Department for the duration of the process; their work, combined with the community events described below, has resulted in the goals and policies presented throughout the plan.

Large Landowner Meetings. Two meetings were held in Spring 2008 to directly address concerns for large landowners. Those meetings helped shape the goals and policies of Chapter 4, Rural Amsterdam/Churchill.

1.2 Organization of the Plan

This plan contains three layers of guidance for residents and decision makers:

- The overall vision and guiding principles presented below, which set the stage for more specific direction that follows;
- Goal statements in each chapter, which are broad statements about how the community will address a particular issue or need;
- Policies, which are specific action statements about how the community will achieve each goal.

The plan calls for exploring three primary strategies for managing growth in the Amsterdam/Churchill area:

- **Partnerships.** Partnerships, or agreements, between two agencies are a primary strategy communities can use to implement their planning policies. A primary strategy to implement plan policies in the Amsterdam/Churchill area is a partnership between Gallatin County and the Montana Department of Transportation.
- **Investments.** A second strategy to implement the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan policies involve investments or commitments. Investments require the residents Amsterdam/Churchill, the County, or perhaps outside agencies (such as MDT or federal grant programs) to invest time, energy, money, or a combination thereof.
- **Requirements.** Requirements can take several different forms. The most common type of requirement is a set of development standards which new development or changes in land use would have to meet (also known as zoning). These standards could include setbacks from canals or ditches,

landscape buffers between commercial and residential uses to help compatibility, lighting standards for new commercial buildings, density requirements for new subdivisions, requirements for central sewer/water, etc. Other types of requirements could take the form of plan policy. Examples include planned road connections, trail connections, or sidewalk connections which new development would have to build as a condition of their approval.

The plan is broken into two geographic areas: the Amsterdam/Churchill core, and Rural Amsterdam/Churchill. Partnerships, investments, and strategies are all discussed as implementation strategies for achieving the goals and policies of each geographic area.

1.3 Authority

This plan will be adopted as the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan Chapter of the Gallatin County Growth Policy. Authority of this community plan is authorized by Montana State Statute and the Gallatin County Growth Policy. Section 76-1-106 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) requires local planning boards to prepare growth policies, and Section 76-1-601 offers general guidance for the contents of a growth policy and/or neighborhood plan. Sections 76-1-602 through 76-1-604 give the procedure for adoption of growth policy or growth policy amendment.

Additionally, Chapter 4.3 of the Gallatin County Growth Policy authorizes the development of Neighborhood, or Community, Plans throughout Gallatin County. Those community plans must be drafted in compliance with the County Growth Policy, and are designed to give greater specificity within a certain defined area.